said network proximity being determined by at least one of latency and number of hops between said requestor and each of said at least two servers.

Claim 6, line 2, change "load balancer" to --server--.

7. (Amended) A method according to claim 5 and further comprising:

monitoring the current load of each of said [load balancer] servers; and

[performing said] directing [step wherein] requests from said requestor to one of said at least two servers when the current load of said [closest load balancer] one of said at least two servers is less than the current load of every other of said [load balancers] at least two servers.

18. (Amended) A network non-geographical load balancing system comprising:

a network;

at least two load balancers connected to said network; and

a requestor connected to said network;

wherein each of said at least two load balancers is operative to determine the network proximity of said requestor, and wherein at least one of said load balancers is operative to designate a closest one of said load balancers by ranking said load balancers by network proximity and to direct requests from either of said requestor and a subnet of said requestor to said closest load balancer,

wherein said network proximity is determined by at least two of latency, number of hops between said requestor and each of said at least two servers and server processing capacity of each of said at least two servers.

Add the following new claims:

--22. A method for non-geographical load balancing requests on a network, the method comprising:

determining the non-geographical quality of the relationship between a requestor and each of at least two servers located at different geographical locations, said non-geographical quality being determined by at least one of latency and number of hops between said requestor and each of said at least two servers;

designating a preferred one of said at least two servers by ranking said at least two servers by said non-geographical quality; and

carrying out non-geographical load balancing of requests based on said ranking.

23. A non-geographical network load balancing system comprising:

at least two servers located at different geographical locations; and

at least one non-geographical load balancer operative to assign requestors to individual ones of said at least two servers based on the non-geographical quality of the relationship between a requestor and each of at least two servers, said non-geographical quality being determined by at least one of latency and number of hops between said requestor and each of said at least two servers.

24. A method for non-geographical load balancing requests on a network, the method comprising:

determining the network proximity of a requestor with respect to each of at least two servers located at different geographical locations;

designating a closest one of said at least two servers by ranking said at least two servers by network proximity; and

directing requests from said requestor to one of said at least two servers having greatest network proximity.

said network proximity being determined by at least two of latency, number of hops between said requestor and each of said at least two servers and server processing capacity of each of said at least two servers.

25. A method for non-geographical load balancing requests on a network, the method comprising:

determining the non-geographical quality of the relationship between a requestor and each of at least two servers located at different geographical locations, said non-geographical quality being determined by at least two of latency, number of hops between said requestor and each of said at least two servers and server processing capacity of each of said at least two servers;

designating a preferred one of said at least two servers by ranking said at least two servers of said non-geographical quality; and

carrying out non-geographical load balancing of requests based on said ranking.

26. A non-geographical network load balancing system comprising:

at least two servers located at different geographical locations; and

at least one non-geographical load balancer operative to assign requestors to individual ones of said at least two servers based on the non-geographical quality of the relationship between a requestor and each of at least two servers, said non-geographical quality being determined by at least two of latency, number of hops between said requestor and each of said at least two servers and server processing capacity of each of said at least two servers.

27. A network load balancing system comprising:

a network;